

# TOUGH CHOICES AHEAD



*What **Really** Matters*

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**Missouri's 325 System**  
**A Vision of Roads and Bridges at Reduced Funding Levels**  
**Missouri's Primary and Supplementary Routes**

**January 2015**



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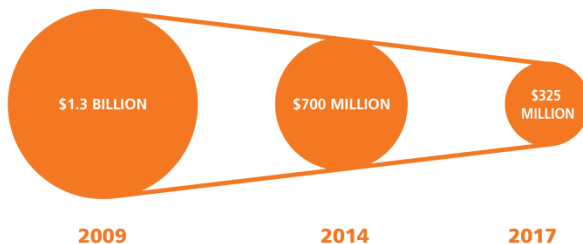


*The benefits of a sustainable transportation system include efficient movement of people and goods, reliable travel times and safe travel for all.*

## What Really Matters

### Introduction

Missouri continues to face insufficient funding for transportation. The Missouri Department of Transportation's financial forecast projects that in 2017, the department's construction budget will drop to \$325 million annually, which is less than the amount needed each year just to take care of our state roads and bridges.



The declining road and bridge construction budget will have a negative effect on the condition of Missouri's 34,000 miles of roads and 10,400 bridges. At the same time, the reduced construction budget will practically eliminate the opportunity for new construction projects that improve safety, ease congestion, create jobs and enhance economic development. It will also be insufficient to fund projects that expand and enhance other means of travel, including transit, freight, aviation, rail and waterways.

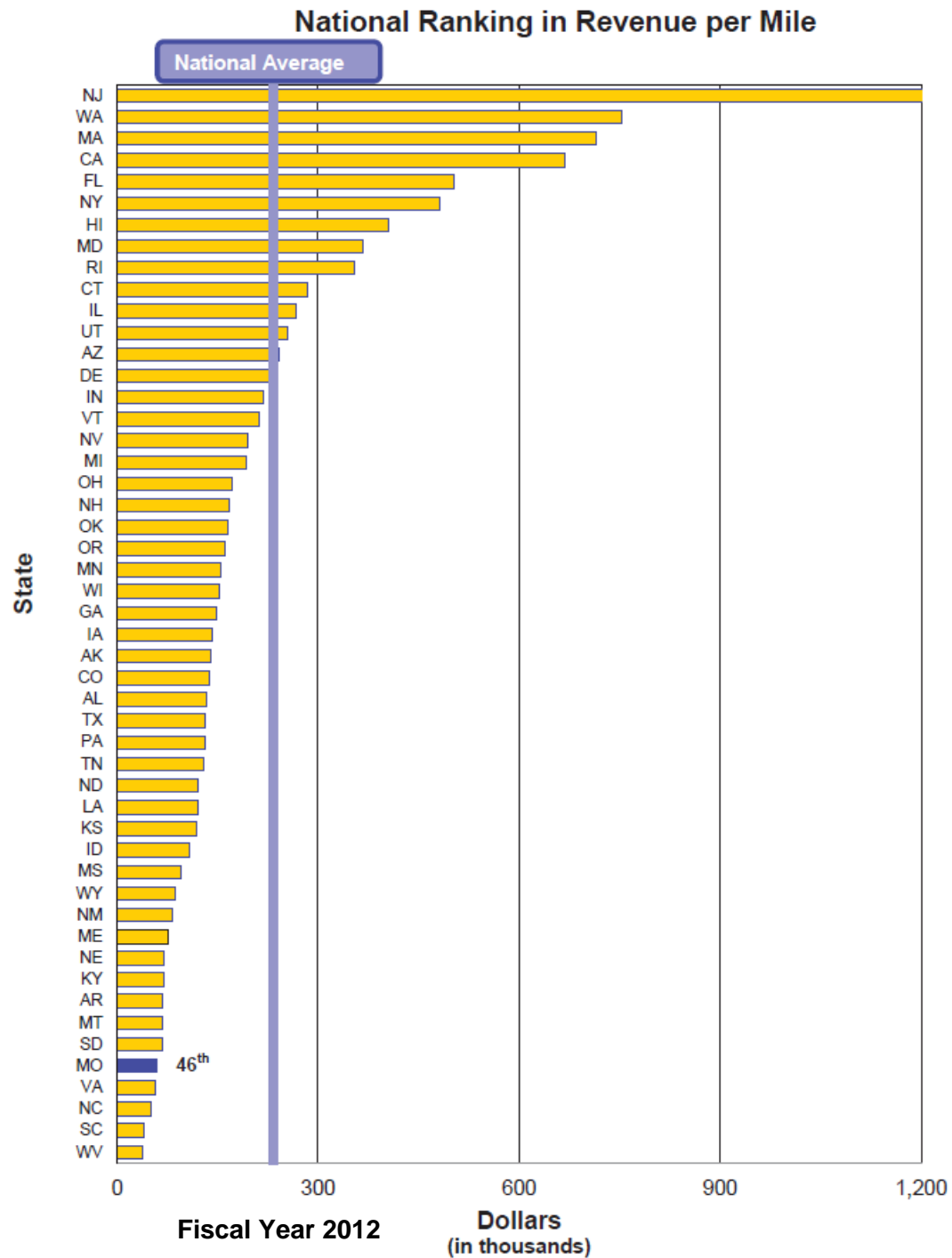
That means we have to make some tough choices. At a \$325 million level of investment, we are proposing to first focus our very limited funding on taking care of Missouri's primary routes, which we are calling Missouri's 325 System. Primary roads include approximately 8,000 miles of Missouri's 34,000-mile system and are the roads that connect cities across the state. Supplementary roads include the remaining miles used for local travel.

The biggest changes:

- It will take all of the \$325 million in construction funding to keep primary roads and bridges in their current condition.
- We will only be able to do limited routine maintenance on supplementary roads and bridges, which means their condition will deteriorate.

## Seventh Largest, 46<sup>th</sup> Lowest

While Missouri has the seventh largest highway system in the nation, we rank 46<sup>th</sup> in revenue spent per mile.



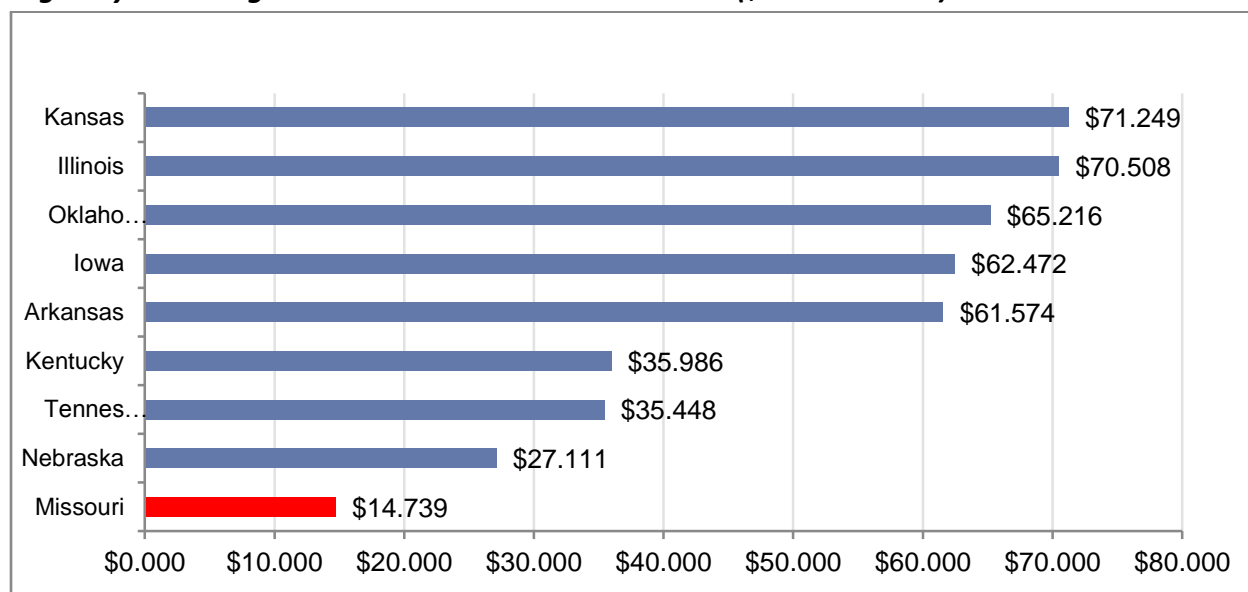
## How We Got Here

Fuel taxes provide the bulk of revenue for Missouri transportation. But here's why that funding source is no longer working for us:

- Fuel tax revenues have become a diminishing revenue stream as cars become more fuel efficient.
- The fuel tax rate has not increased in almost 20 years, while the cost of doing business continues to rise.
- Inflation has decreased our purchasing power by more than 50 percent. What was 17 cents (state fuel tax per gallon) of purchasing power in 1992 is now about eight cents and decreasing each year.
- The cost of asphalt, concrete and steel – the staples of the industry – are as much as 200 percent more than they were in 1992.
- In 2004, Missourians approved Constitutional Amendment 3, which authorized MoDOT to sell bonds to make Missouri roads and bridges smoother and safer, sooner. Now we're paying back that bond debt.
- In 2017, Missouri will not have enough money to match federal funds. Federal funds provide a \$4 to \$1 investment that Missouri will lose.

## How Does Missouri Compare?

**Highway and Bridge Construction Investment Per Mile (\$ in thousands)**



Missouri data ranges 2014-2019. Other states range from 2014-2020. Data compiled via state transportation agencies' planning divisions.

## What We're Facing

Right now, many of our most-traveled highways are in pretty good condition. Plus, some road construction continues as we fulfill the commitments we've made. As a result, many people don't perceive a problem, but the reality is that many roads and bridges need to be rebuilt today. Often, a road or bridge will appear to be in good shape because the real concerns lie beneath the

surface. By the time problems become readily apparent, the structures need major and costly repairs.

Interstate 70 is a prime example. Built in the 1950s with a 20-year life expectancy, I-70 is a constant money drain as we struggle to keep the pavement smooth for travel. In reality, the highway is crumbling beneath the surface, and Missouri's most important transportation corridor is in dire need of replacement and expansion.

Compounding the problem is the fact that, to most people, \$325 million sounds like a lot of money. But the average costs of road and bridge construction show that \$325 million is not enough to tackle all of the projects Missourians want, much less keep our roads and bridges in their current condition.

#### **Average Costs for Missouri Highways**

##### **Cost to Resurface (per mile)**

Major Highway	\$128,000
Interstate	\$160,000

##### **Cost for New Construction (per mile)**

Two-Lane Highway	\$1.8 million
Four-Lane Highway	\$4.6 million

#### **Average Costs for Missouri Bridges**

##### **Cost to Rehabilitate**

Minor Bridge	\$325,000
Major Bridge	\$15 million

##### **Cost to Replace**

Minor Bridge	\$655,000
Major Bridge	\$10 million-\$250 million

#### **Actions MoDOT Has Taken**

In the past few years, MoDOT has taken significant action to direct as much funding as possible to Missouri's roads and bridges.

- We've tightened our belts by reducing staff, facilities and equipment.
- We've cut costs through innovation and technology.
- We've delivered projects on time and under budget.

In addition, we've used our limited funding to make critical safety improvements that have helped to reduce traffic fatalities. And we've worked diligently with our partners across the state to prioritize transportation projects should we get additional revenue to tackle them.

#### **Rough Roads, Poor Bridges**

But let's face it. Decreased funding and increases in inflation, materials and labor costs ultimately result in deteriorating roads and bridges. Tough choices will need to be made about which routes to maintain with scarce resources.



## Missouri's \$325 Million System: Primary and Supplementary Roads

At a \$325 million level of investment, we must focus our limited funding on taking care of the roads critical to our state's needs. The primary system is set forth in state law and defined by the Missouri Highways and Transportation Commission as those routes that connect the state's communities, as opposed to roads that are used primarily for local travel.

The primary routes are approximately 8,000 miles that form an interconnected system, providing direct service to most cities with a population of 1,000 or more.

Nearly all Missouri's major roadways are part of the primary system. Only those major routes that function as business routes, loops or more like local roadways are excluded from the primary system.

We have decided to focus our limited resources on the primary system because it offers equity across the state between urban and rural areas. Every county in the state has at least one highway on the primary system. The primary system differs from MoDOT's current focus on major and minor roads because the major roads, which make up 20 percent of the system and carry 80 percent of the traffic, are confined to limited areas of the state.

**Primary** = Approximately 8,000 miles of Missouri's 34,000-mile system; they are the roads that connect cities across the state.

**Supplementary** = the remaining miles used for local travel.



## Big Impacts

Here's what Missourians can expect to get with a \$325 million level of investment in their transportation system:

- It will take all of the \$325 million in construction funding to keep primary roads and bridges in their current condition.
- We will only be able to do limited routine maintenance on supplementary roads and bridges, which means their condition will deteriorate.

In 10 years:

- 18,833 supplementary miles will be in poor condition.
- 85 percent of primary miles will be in good condition.

While we'll be able to keep our primary roads and bridges in good condition, taking care of the supplementary roads is another story. And it's not a pretty one. Given the limited dollars available, only 27 percent will be in good condition in 10 years. And the 26 percent in poor condition today will more resemble gravel than paved roads.

At \$325 million, we'll only be able to focus on pothole repairs and patching. Roadways will increasingly look like a patchwork quilt, and motorists' rides will get rougher. Safety on these supplementary routes will be compromised as well. Already, nearly half of the fatalities on state highways occur on supplementary roads. Moving forward, we won't have the resources to maintain these roads, much less add safety features, such as shoulders and rumble strips.

## Bridges on Missouri's Supplementary Roads

There are currently 483 bridges in poor or serious condition on the state's supplementary roads – bridges that are not on the list to be repaired or replaced. The number of bridges in poor or serious condition will grow to 1,434 in 10 years. It is anticipated that approximately 90 of these bridges will be closed over the next 10 years.

Year	2014	2017	2019	2024
Count	483	670	832	1,434

## Bigger Impacts

The supplementary highways include some significant urban routes we won't be able to maintain in good condition at \$325 million. These urban roads do not connect the state's system of roads and bridges, but rather fill a more local transportation need. Still, they carry high traffic volumes – anywhere from 30,000 to 50,000 vehicles per day.



Here are some prominent examples:

- **St. Louis** – Route 67 (Lindbergh Boulevard), Route 30 (Gravois Road), Route 340 (Olive Street/Clarkson Road), Route 94, Route K, Route 109
- **Kansas City** – Broadway Bridge Extension, Route 350 (Blue Parkway), Route 150, Route 71 (Bruce Watkins Drive)
- **Springfield** – Business Route 65/Loop 44 (Glenstone Avenue), Business Route 65/Loop 44 (Chestnut Expressway), Route D (Sunshine Street), Route 744 (Kearney Street)
- **Columbia** – Route 740 (Stadium Boulevard), Route 163 (Providence Road), Business Loop 70, Route 763 (Rangeline Road)
- **Jefferson City** – Route 179, Business Route 50 (Missouri Boulevard)
- **Joplin** – Business Route 49 (Rangeline Road), Route 43, Route 66 (7<sup>th</sup> Street)
- **St. Joseph** – Route 169 (Belt Highway), Route 59 (St. Joseph Avenue)
- **Cape Girardeau** – William Street

Without the funding to maintain these roads and fix the bridges on them, they will deteriorate quickly because of their high traffic counts. They will also require more emergency pothole and bridge repairs, which in turn means increased lane closures, reduced weight limits on bridges and higher levels of congestion.

As maintenance resources are shifted to patch potholes and maintain roads like the ones listed above, lower volume routes in the same areas will deteriorate at an accelerated rate. We will maintain these roads on a “worst-first” scenario to keep them as safe as possible. But there may come a time when the poor road conditions call for reduced speeds and bridge weight limits. Eventually some roads may become so unsafe they will have to be closed.

## What Really Matters to Missourians

We reached out to Missourians in the latter part of 2013 as part of our long-range planning process to find out what they wanted to see in their transportation system. The resulting plan, called “A Vision for Missouri’s Transportation Future,” was developed after an intense seven-month public engagement period.

Based on the input received, here’s what Missourians told us mattered most to them:

- Take care of the transportation system and services we enjoy today;
- Keep all travelers safe, no matter the mode of transportation;
- Invest in projects that spur economic growth and create jobs; and
- Give Missourians better transportation choices (more viable urban and rural transit, friendlier bike and pedestrian accommodations, improvements in rail, ports and airport operations).

Given Missouri’s funding challenge, it’s obvious we can’t keep our 34,000 miles of roads and 10,400 bridges in the condition they are in today, much less provide the projects that meet Missourians primary goals for transportation.



Instead, we will plan for the future by:

- Focusing the extremely limited resources on the primary roads and bridges – approximately 8,000 centerline miles of roads that connect communities.
- Reducing the level of service on the remaining centerline miles of roads that make up the state's supplementary system.

### **Take Action**

- Educate yourself on the key issues – go to [www.modot.org/toughchoicesahead](http://www.modot.org/toughchoicesahead) to learn more.
- Ask tough questions and help determine the right choices for Missouri.
- Discuss the issues with your family and friends.
- Use social media to make your voice heard.
- Contact your elected officials.